

NEED OF NUTRITIONAL SUPPORT IN HEALTH- AN AYURVEDA BASED PERSPECTIVE

It is rightly said that “We are what we eat”. The food or the daily diet we consume is source of nutrients and energy that is necessary for every cellular activity, immune function, gene expression and ultimate the overall health. Ayurveda has incorporated these basic facts regarding the *Aahara* or diet and its application in maintenance of health and prevention of diseases. It is rightfully stated that-

आहारसम्भवं वस्तु रोगाश्चाहारसम्भवाः| हिताहितविशेषाच्च विशेषः सुखदुःखयोः||

Cha.Su.28/45

According to Ayurveda, existence of all the living beings is the resultant of *Aahara*, the *Roga* or diseases also the results of *Aahara Sevana*. Wholesome and unwholesome food is responsible for happiness or sorrow respectively. This the reason behind the inclusion of *Aahara* as a part of *Trayopastambha* or three pillars of life. (Cha.Su.11/35) Whether or not any person is affected with any disability or disease, the role of diet can never be neglected. This review will try to show the importance of nutritional support in form of *Aahara* as explained by the principles of Ayurveda and advances in modern researches that support the claims of Ayurveda.

Historical review of concepts of *Aahara* in the skeleton of major *Samhita*-

Ayurveda primarily focuses on the role of entities like *Aahara* in maintaining the health. Hence the basics regarding *Aahara* are mentioned in the first two chapters of the *Swasthya Chatushka* (group of chapters throwing light upon the importance of preventive measures for health), where *Matrashitiya* (Cha.Su.5) explains the importance of balanced and appropriate amount of diet while *Tasyashitiya Adhyaya* (Cha.Su.6) explains the seasonal regime pertaining to diet consumption and *Satmya Kalpana* resulted to *Aahara*. An entire *Chatuska* (group of 4 chapters discussing the similar subject matter) is dedicated to the study of diet named as *Annapana Chatushka* where the importance of diet, the classification of dietary food groups and implications of consumption of unbalanced diet are rightfully mentioned. It is further elaborated in the first two chapters of *Vimanasthana*, where *Rasavimana Adhyaya* (Cha.Vi.1) explains the basis of characterisation of *Aahara* and *Ashtau-Aahara Vidhi Visheshayana* which are eight specific factors focusing on the processing and consumption of food. The

Trividha-Kukshiya Adhayaya (Cha.Vi.2) again mentions the importance of quantity of diet to be consumed and *Ama Vikara* like *Alasaka* and *Visuchika* that occur due to consumption of unbalanced diet. *Sushruta* and *Vagbhatta Samhita* have also dedicated entire chapters for the classification of dietary items, both solid (*Anna*) and liquid (*Drava*) considering them as an important part of *Hetu Skandha* and means of medication or representative of *Aushadh Skandha*.

Aahara means to healthy life

प्राणाःप्राणभृतामन्नमन्नंलोकोऽभिधावति। वर्णःप्रसादःसौस्वर्यजीवितंप्रतिभासुखम्॥

तुष्टिःपुष्टिर्बलंमेधासर्वमन्नेप्रतिष्ठितम्। लौकिकंकर्मयद्वृत्तौस्वर्गतौयच्चवैदिकम्॥

कर्मापवर्गेयच्चोक्तंतच्चाप्यन्नेप्रतिष्ठितम्।

Cha. Su. 28/349-350

As mentioned earlier, food is the basis of existence and sustenance to the human body. Ayurveda states that many entities like *Bala* (strength), *Varna* (complexion), *Upachaya* (built and physique), *Utsaha* (vitality) are largely dependent on the *Aahara*. Every task initiated by the human is for the purpose of obtaining diet and sustaining life. Hence the happenings of present life and even salvation are dependent on the diet consumed. Thus it remains an important factor since birth to death for the maintenance of livelihood. WHO also recommends that eating healthy diet protects one from many chronic non-communicable diseases, like heart disease, diabetes and cancer. Eating a variety of foods and consuming less salt, sugars and saturated and industrially-produced trans-fats, are essential for healthy diet.¹

Agni and Aahara

Agni is an important determinant factor for the proper digestion and assimilation of diet and hence in prevention of occurrence of diseases. The *Agni* function is further affected by *Aahara-Matra* or quantity of diet consumed. (Cha.Su.5/3) It is advised that the *Guru Aahara* like *Pishtanna* (flours), *Ikshu* (sugary substances), *Ksheera* (milk and milk products), *Mansa* (meat) should be consumed in lesser amounts as these are heavy to digest while *Shali*, *Mudga* etc. should be also not be over-consumed despite being light to digest (Cha.Su.5/5,6). Following these simple rules can help in prevention of various diseases related to digestion. The contemporary research also supports this hypothesis of consumption of nutrient rich food items like fruits and vegetables in balanced amount as compared to high fat and calorie rich food products.² Researches have proved that food is amongst the most important things that provide

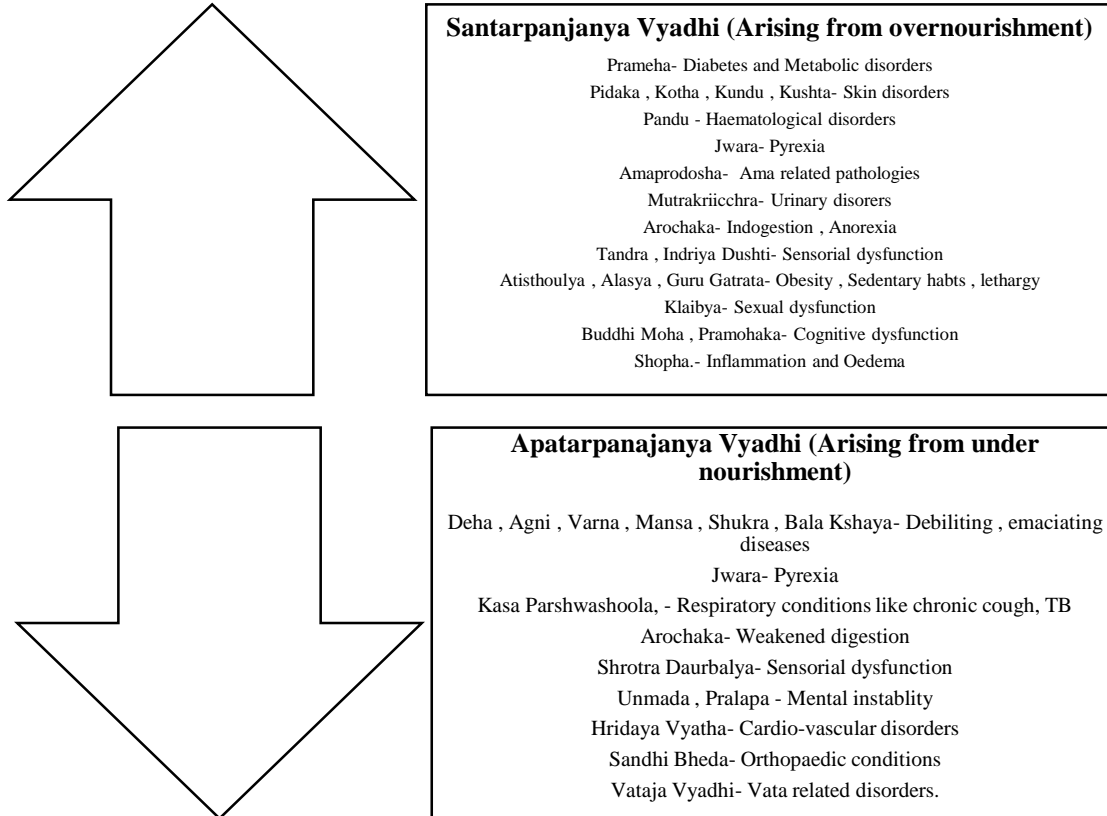
energy and development , maintain life , stimulate growth and development and promotes health. Food functions at all the domains of health including physical or physiological, psychological and social domain.³ It is well known that *Agni* is an important factor that is responsible for assimilation and regulation of diet and vitiation of which also plays a role in manifestation of any pathology in the body.⁴

Aahara as causative factor of disease

हिताहारोपयोग एक एव पुरुषवृद्धिकरो भवति, अहिताहारोपयोगः पुनर्व्याधिनिमित्तमिति ॥

Cha.Su.25/31

Charaka Samhita rightfully states that wholesome diet or *Hita-Aahara* is prime necessity for maintenance of health and deviation from the same can result in occurrence of disease. It is interesting to note that the two basic classifications of diseases according to Ayurveda i.e. *Santarpana* and *Apatarpana* are dependent on *Aahara*. The *Santarpanoththa Vyadhi* are caused by over-eating or overconsumption of excessively *Guru* (heavy), *Snigdha* (unctuous), *Sheeta* (cold) *Aahara* that contribute to the vitiation of *Kapha Dosha* and *Meda Dhatu*, while *Apatarpanoththa Vyadhi* result from the consumption of restricted diet that can result in debility and *Vata Dosha* vitiation (Cha.Su.23). These can be summarised in the figure as shown below-



The *Sthoulya- Karshya* are two main morphological representatives of *Santarpanjanya* and *Apatarpanjanya* conditions and thus are resultants of this imbalance in diet consumption.

देहवृत्तौ यथाऽऽहारस्तथा स्वप्नः सुखो मतः। स्वप्नाहारसमुत्थे च स्थौल्यकार्श्ये विशेषतः॥

Cha. Su. 19/51

The western biomedical science also states that faulty nutrition or malnutrition can result in array of pathological conditions. Over nourishment (comparable to *Santarpana*) can result in obesity, cardiovascular risks, metabolic disorders, cancers and cognitive decline while the undernutrition is results in low weight, protein energy malnutrition, emaciation, anaemia and generalised low immune function (comparable to *Apatarpana*).⁵

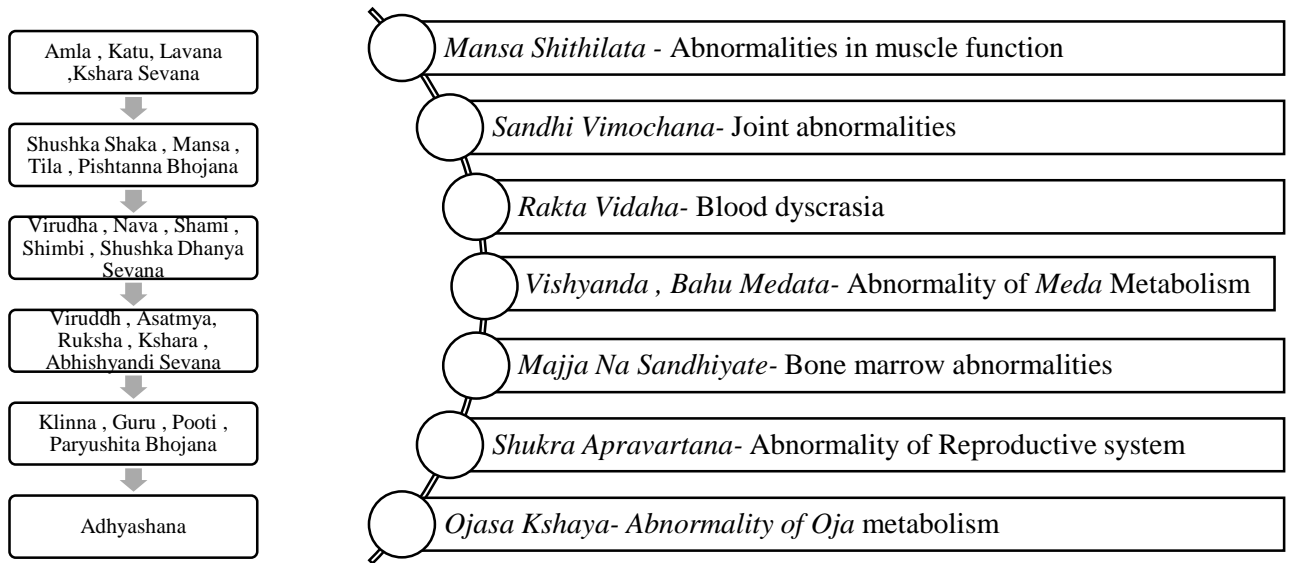
Another factor responsible for the causation of diseases according to Ayurveda is the consumption of *Viruddha Aahara* and *Gramya Aahara*. The former represents the incompatible foods resulting from the consumption of food items that represent antagonist or incompatibility in terms of combination, preparation and method of consumption of food. The *Viruddha Aahara* is the type of diet that does not radically expel the vitiated *Dosha* from body but however can lead to chronic accumulation of the same. These are of 18 types with manifestations affecting multiple organs and systems. (Cha.Su.26/85-103)

Viruddha Aahara (Types and implications)

Desha Viruddha- Incompatible for particular place	Skin diseases-
Kaala Viruddha- Opposite to weather condition	Visarpa , Visphota , Kilasa , Kushtha
Agni Viruddha- Antagonist to state of <i>Agni</i>	Anorectal disorders-
Matra Viruddha- Imbalanced amount	Bhagandara
Satmya Viruddha- Antagonist to habit	Gastro-intestinal disorders-
Dosha Viruddha- Antagonist to <i>Tri-dosha</i>	Grahani , Udara , Amavisha , Amlapitta , Aadhmaan
Sanskara Viruddha- Incompatible method of preparation	Reproduction related disorders-
Veerya Viruddha- Unbalanced potency	Shandhya , Santana Dosha
Koshtha Viruddha- Not considering the bowel habit	Indriya and higehr system related conditions-
Avastha Viruddha- Not considering the health condition	Andhya (blindness)
Krama Viruddha- Consuming food in improper order	Galagraha
Parihara Viruddha- Without considering the contra-indications	Pandu
Upachara Viruddha- Without considering the indicatiions	Murccha , Mada
Paaka Viruddha- Improper cooking process	Peenasa
Sanyoga Viruddha- Improper combination of food	Mrutyu
Hridviruddha- Without considering palatibility	
Sampat Viruddha- Without considering the quality of food eaten	
Vidhi Viruddha- Without following the rules of eating	

The *Gramya Aahara* is mentioned in the *Rasayana* chapter of *Charaka Samhita* stating it as a

major part of faulty diet leading to causation of variety of diseases this again can be summarised in the figure given below (Cha.Chi.1/2/3).



This also includes the faulty dietary habits like *Adhyashana*, *Vishamashana*, *Samashana* which represent deviation from normal physiology.

Many *Aahara* items are directly mentioned as *Nidana* or aetiological factors in the causation of many diseases. The *Nidana* of *Prameha* like condition is largely based on the dietary factors like *Navanna Sevana* (consumption of newly harvested crops), *Paya* (consumption of milk and milk products), *Mansa* (consumption of meat), *Gudavaikrita* (consumption of jaggery and sugar products), *Madya* (alcohol) all of which lead to vitiation of *Kapha* dominant *Tridosha Dushti*. (Cha. Ni.4/5) Thus process of pathogenesis of *Prameha* continues in the body till the person does not restrain from the consumption of *Nidana* making the *Nidana Parivarjana* the most important step in treatment process. (Su.Ut.1) Recent researches have proved that the nutrition is an important environmental risk factor for metabolic syndrome.⁶

***Aahara* as *Aushadhi* (Diet as medication)**

The conservative yet sustainable approach to reduce the dependency on medication and to provide nutrition along with treatment is fulfilled by the application of the concept of “*Aahara* as *Aushadhi*”. *Kashyapa* has also rightfully stated *Aahara* as *Maha-Bhaishajya* or supreme medicine. This is the reason why there is mention of *Aushadhi Siddha Yavagu* for the purpose of reinstating the *Agni* post administration of *Shodhana* therapy like *Vamana* etc. It is also useful for arresting the complications of *Shodhana*. (Cha.Su.2) These include the *Yavagu* prepared with rice and pulses medicated with herbs indicated for the management of associated

conditions. The *Sansarjana Krama* (Post *Shodhana* dietary regime) is thus vital for maintenance of health and strengthening the *Agni* post radical therapy like *Shodhana* as it is rightly stated-

यथाऽपुरग्निस्तृणगोमयाद्यैः सन्धुक्ष्यमाणो भवति क्रमेण॥

महान् स्थिरः सर्वपचस्तथैव शुद्धस्य पेयादिभिरन्तरग्निः।

Cha.Si.1/12

It is also important to note that the main treatment modality of both *Santarpana* and *Apatarpana* involve the dietary recommendations like *Yava* and *Godhuma* respectively. (Cha.Su.21/20) The *Santarpana* modalities are primarily liquids or food based interventions that are nutrient rich like *Saktu*, *Mantha*, *Tarpana* which provide instant energy and vitality reducing the dehydration and debility caused due to lack of energy. (Cha.Su.23/33)

Dietary consumables that can be used on daily basis and their implications on health-

While describing the means to attain healthy life, *Hita-Aahara* is given prime importance as a part of *Dinacharya* (daily regime) and *Ritucharya* or seasonal regime. (Cha.Sha. 2/47). Hence it is necessary to consume few beneficial food products to live a healthy life.

षष्टिकाञ्छालिमुद्गांश्च सैन्धवामलके यवान् आन्तरीक्षं पयः सर्पिर्जाङ्गलं मधु चाभ्यसेत्॥

Cha.Su.5/12

The *Nityasevaniya Aahara Dravya* mentioned above represent wholesome dietary food items which can be consumed daily irrespective of place, time and *Prakriti* like personalized factors. These are easily available, part of staple diet inclusive of appropriate amount of carbohydrates, fats, proteins, these can be processed easily and palatable for the all the age-groups young to old. These represent the different types of diet as directed by WHO for the maintenance of health like the DASH diet and Mediterranean diet. ⁷

Generalised food items to be avoided to fight disease manifestation-

वल्लूरं शुष्कशाकानि शालूकानि बिसानि च। नाभ्यसेद्गौरवान्मांसं कृशं नैवोपयोजयेत्॥ Cha.Su.5/10

Acharya Charaka strictly mentions that one should not be habitual to take dried meat, dried vegetables, *Shaluka* (tuber of Lotus-*Nymphaea alba* Linn.) and *Bisa* (stalk of Lotus I.e. *Nymphaea alba* Linn.) as these are heavy to digest. One should also avoid the consumption of meat of emaciated animal. These hamper the functioning of *Agni* leading to range of diseases.

कूर्चिकांश्च किलाटांश्च शौकरं गव्यमाहिषे मत्स्यान् दधि च माषांश्च यवकांश्च न शीलयेत्॥

Cha.Su.5/11

These again represent the food items that are rich in trans-fats and unsaturated fats including processed dairy items and cereals like *Yavaka* with lesser nutrient quantity. It is also advised that one should avoid the consumption of *Paryushita Aahara* or stale food except some dietary items like *Mansa* (meat), *Haritaka* (condiments), *Shushka Shaka* (dry vegetables), *Phala* (fruits). (Cha.Su.8) It is established that the stored or stale food results in build of micro-organisms in the food questioning the safety of the food consumed⁸. It is also advised to avoid the consumption of *Dadhi* or curd at night or without adjuvants like *Ghrita*, *Sharkara*, *Mudga-Yusha* etc. (Cha.Su.7/61-62) Curd is daily consumed in various households across the country and not following to regulations regarding the consumption of same can lead to occurrence of diseases like *Jwara*, *Raktapitta*, *Visarpa*, *Kushtha*, *Pandu*, *Bhrama* as per Ayurveda. A study published in Pubmed indexed journal⁹ has also stated the risk of development of hypertension like conditions due to chronic consumption of yoghurt and high fat substances. Thus consideration even minute factors like above can greatly affect the functioning of body.

Concept of Satmya-

The *Aahara* is largely dependent on the concept of *Satmya* where the food becomes suitable to the body when it is habitually ingested or regularly consumed. This is dependent on the *Desha* (place), *Kaala* (time) and *Dravya* (dietary item) that is consumed. (Cha.Su.6/50) Thus the bodily functioning is accustomed to the diet consumed hence the harmful effects are avoided to greater extent. Any drastic change in food habits can lead to disease implications. Recent advances in research also support the claim that food habits can have protective effects for health and maintenance of body weight.¹⁰

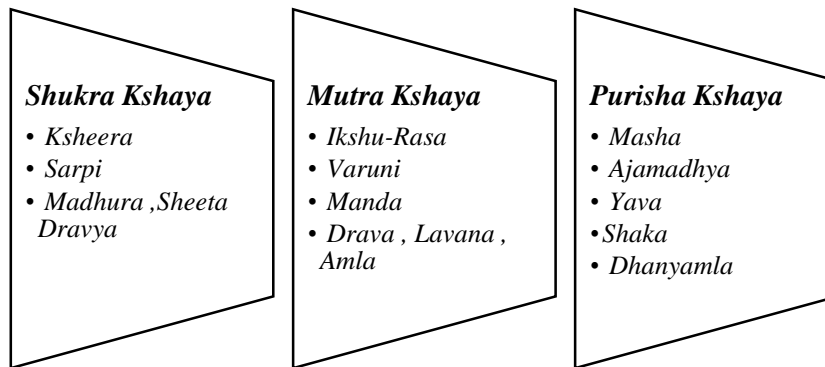
Nutritional support in disease conditions-

पथ्यं पथोऽनपेतं यद्यच्चोक्तं मनसः प्रियम्। यच्चाप्रियमपथ्यं च नियतं तन्न लक्षयेत्॥

Cha.Su.25/45

Ayurveda has first introduced the world to the concept of *Pathya Aahara* or importance of consumption of wholesome diet in addition to the medicinal and lifestyle intervention for combating the disease manifestation and preventing the complications of diseases. Hence the considerations regarding the regulations of diet and prescription of diet in order to reduce the negative impact of disease comes under the umbrella of *Pathya Kalpana*. (Cha.Su.25/45) In

Shareerasthana, for the purpose of replenishment of *Shareera* components like *Shukra*, *Purisha*, *Mutra* many dietary interventions are included which help to combat the *Kshaya*.



It is also interesting to note that disease specific *Pathya* or dietary regime is put forth by the *Samhita* as an important part of disease management. This can be summarised in the table given below-

Vyadhi	Specific Pathya Aahara mentioned
<i>Jwara</i>	<i>Yavagu , Manda, Vilepi</i> (rice soups), <i>Lajatarpana , Ghrita</i> for purpose of pacification of <i>Jwara , Strosasa-shodhana</i>
<i>Raktapitta</i>	<i>Tarpana</i> for <i>Urdhwaga Raktapitta , Peya</i> for <i>Adhoga Raktapitta</i>
<i>Gulma</i>	<i>Vata</i> pacifying dietary interventions like <i>Mansa , Sarpi , Mansa rasa</i> etc.
<i>Prameha</i>	Consumption of specialised diet inclusive of items with low glycaemic index like <i>Yava</i> (Barley). Liquid interventions like <i>Saarodaka , Tushodaka , Madhu-udaka , Triphala Rasa</i> etc.
<i>Kushta</i>	<i>Tikta Shaka</i> (leafy vegetables) , <i>Patola , Jangala Mansa , Purana Dhanya , Mudga</i> (Green gram)etc.
<i>Yakshma</i>	Avoidance of <i>Vishamashana</i> which is amongst the major causative factors.
<i>Unmada , Apasmara</i>	Consumption of <i>Purana Ghrita</i> , Milk and bovine dairy products for the purpose of mental stability
<i>Kshataksheena</i>	<i>Santarpana , Sheeta , Avidahi , Laghu Annapana</i> like <i>Tarpana , Peya</i> etc.
<i>Udara</i>	<i>Paya</i> or milk to maintain <i>Bala , Sthairya</i> of the patient
<i>Arsha, Grahani Atisaara</i>	<i>Takra</i> or buttermilk as a part of regular diet is advised due to its <i>Grahi, Deepana, Laghu</i> properties. It acts as a probiotic re-establishing the gut microbiota thus facilitating the process of digestion and excretion

<i>Pandu</i>	<i>Shali , Godhuma , Jangala Rasa , Masura Rasa</i> to establish the nutritional status
<i>Shwasa</i>	<i>Kapha-Vaata Shamaka, Ushna, Vaatanulomana Aushadh</i> for correcting the original pathology of <i>Shwasa</i> . <i>Bruhana</i> is also indicated to maintain the strength of patient.
<i>Kaasa</i>	<i>Kaasa Bhaishajya Sangraha</i> involves different dietary interventions including <i>Bhojya , Paana , Sarpi , Paanaka , Ksheera</i> and <i>Sarpi-Guda</i>
<i>Chardi</i>	<i>Phala Rasa , Mansa Rasa , Paanaka</i> etc. to maintain the hydration in the body.
<i>Visarpa</i>	Avoidance of <i>Vidahi</i> and <i>Viruddha Aahara</i> to prevent the pain and burning sensation arising from the rash of Herpes
<i>Trishna</i>	Use of variety of <i>Madhura, Amla, Laghu, Sheeta Drava Dravya</i> like <i>Ksheera, Guda, Sita, Kshaudra</i> etc. to prevent dehydration and pacify the thirst.
<i>Madatyaya</i>	<i>Ksheera</i> as an important component of diet to prevent the complications of <i>Madatyaya</i> .
<i>Udavarta</i>	Inclusion of <i>Ushnodaka , Paya (milk) , Mansa Rasa</i> and other <i>Vaata-Anulomana Dravya</i> as a part of daily diet regime
<i>Mutrakricchra</i>	Consumption of <i>Mutrala Dravya</i> (drugs facilitating production and flow of urine) like <i>Ervaru Beeja, Trapusa (cucumber), Draksha Rasa, Ikshu Rasa, Madhu, Sharkara Tandulodaka</i> for smooth excretion of urine. <i>Avapeedaka Ghrita</i> also helps as an impactful intervention in this condition.
<i>Vatavyadhi</i>	Inclusion of <i>Sneha</i> and <i>Snigdha Dravya</i> like <i>Ghrita, Ksheera</i> in daily diet and a specific recommendation to arrest the spread of <i>Vata Dosha</i> .
<i>Vatarakta</i>	Avoidance of <i>Katu, Ushna, Lavana, Abhishyandi, Amla Aahara</i> and inclusion of <i>Purana Dhanya, Shaka, Yusha, Mansa Rasa</i> to pacify the <i>Vata Dosha</i> .

Aspects of nutritional support according to Ayurveda

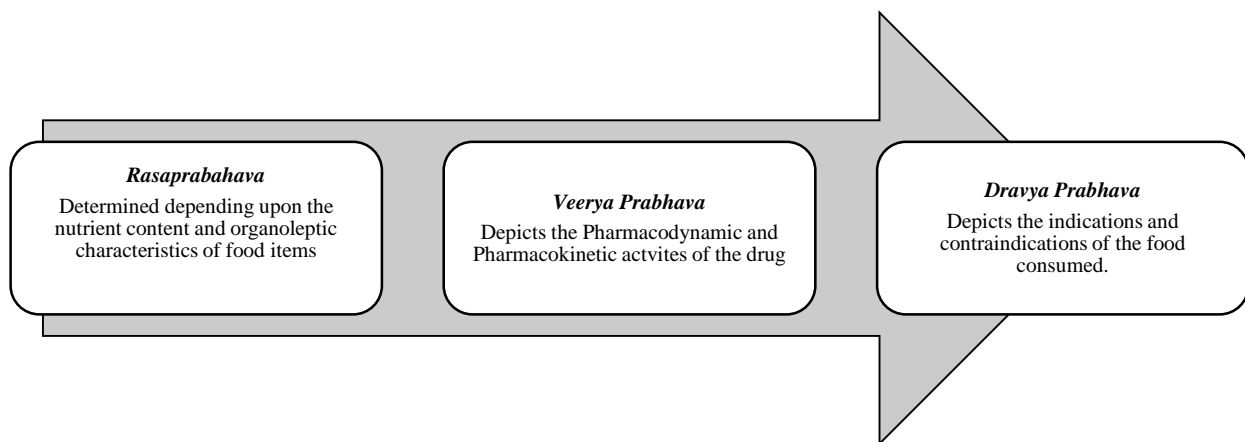
शूकधान्यशमीधान्यमांसशाकफलाश्रयान्। वर्गान्हरितमद्याम्बुगोरसेक्षुविकारिकान्॥

दशद्वौचापरौवर्गौकृतान्नाहारयोगिनाम्। रसवीर्यविपाकैश्चप्रभावैश्चप्रचक्ष्महे॥

Cha.Su.27/ 7-8.

Acharya Charaka has rightfully divided the categories of food into twelve types each representing a dietary component represented of one or more of carbohydrates, proteins, fats, micronutrients, minerals, water, fluid intake etc. This is inclusive of different cereals, pulses, meat, green vegetables, fruits, condiments, salads, fluids, processed foods that should be included in one's diet to achieve wholesome nutrition. The attributes of each of the constituents are understood with the help of principles of *Rasa*, *Veerya*, *Vipaka* and *Prabhava* which determine the effect of diet on the condition of *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, *Mala* and overall body functioning.

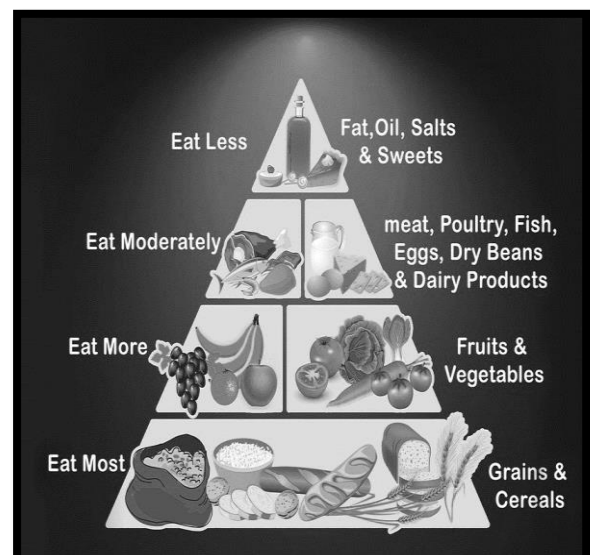
Thus it is necessary to include the dietary items from this wide range of category of *Aahara*



Varga to achieve overall nutrition.

The ICMR (Indian Council of Medical Research) has thus stated five main food groups inclusive of commonly consumed dietary items across the country to fulfil the nutritional demand. These are similar with the *Aahara Varga* of *Charaka Samhita* stating the correlation between ancient and contemporary sciences.

Food groups	Nutrients
1.Cereal and products : Rice, Wheat, ragi, maize, bajra, rice flakes, wheat flour, sprouted cereal	Energy, protein, Invisible fat, B vitamins, iron, calcium, fiber
2.Pulses and legumes Bengal gram, black gram, cow pea, peas (dry), soybeans	Protein, energy , invisible fat, thiamine, riboflavin, folic acid, calcium, iron and fibre
3.Milk & Meat products: I) Milk and skimmed milk, cheese, curd II)Chicken, liver, fish, egg and meat	Protein, fat, riboflavin, calcium.
4.Fruits & vegetables : I) Mango, guava, tomato, papaya, orange, sweet lime, watermelon Green leafy vegetables : II) Amaranth,spinach, drumstick leaves, coriander leaves, fenugreek leaves Other vegetables : Carrot,onion,brinjal,ladiesfinger, beans, capsicum, cauliflower, drumstick	Carotenoids, vitamin C, riboflavin, folic acid, iron, fibre Riboflavin, folic acid, calcium, fibre, iron, carotenoids Carotenoids, folic acid, calcium and fibre
5.Fat & sugars : I) Fats :Butter, ghee, groundnut oil, coconut oil, hydrogenated fat, cooking oils II) Sugar and jaggery	Energy, Essential fatty acids and fat soluble vitamins Energy and iron



The classification on the basis of different *Aahara Varga* according to Ayurveda can be understood as per the table given below-

<i>Aahara Varga</i>	Type	Examples as mentioned in Samhita	Use of <i>Aahara Varga</i>
<i>Shooka Dhanya</i>	Cereals	<i>Shali</i> (Rice varieties), <i>Yava</i> (Barley), <i>Godhuma</i> (wheat), <i>Shyamaka</i> etc. (Millets)	Important to fulfil the satiety , calorie requirement , fibre content
<i>Shami Dhanya</i>	Pulses	<i>Mudga</i> (Green gram) , <i>Kulatha</i> (Horse gram) , <i>Masha</i> (Black gram) , <i>Masoor</i> (Red gram) , Peas , Beans	Fulfil the protein and calorie requirement
<i>Mansa</i>	Meat/ Animal protein	<i>Anoopa</i> , <i>Jangala Mansa</i> , <i>Matsya</i> - Poultry , fish , livestock meat	Necessary for protein level , Vitamin B12 levels , muscle mass development.
<i>Shaka</i>	Leafy vegetables	<i>Palankasha</i> (Spinach) , <i>Methi</i> (Fenugreek) etc.	Provide fibre content , iron content , micronutrients
<i>Phala</i>	Fruits	<i>Mrudwika</i> (resins , grapes), <i>Kharjura</i> (dates) , <i>Narikela</i> (coconut) etc.	Provide micronutrients , fibre content , water content
<i>Haritaka</i>	Green Herbs , Garnishing food items	<i>Ardraka</i> (ginger) , <i>Lashuna</i> (garlic), <i>Moolaka</i> (radish), <i>Surasa</i> (Basil leaves)	Act as carminative , appetizers , add taste to the food
<i>Madya</i>	Alcohol and fermented preparations	<i>Sura</i> , <i>Madira</i> , <i>Madya</i> , <i>Kanji</i> , <i>Tushodaka</i> , <i>Sauveeraka</i>	Improve digestion and assimilation
<i>Jala Varga</i>	Drinking water	<i>Mahendra Jala</i> , <i>Nadi Jala</i>	Hydration and water content
<i>Gorasa Varga</i>	Milk and milk products	<i>Ksheera</i> (Milk) , Ghee , <i>Dadhi</i> (curd) , <i>Takra</i> (buttermilk) , <i>Navneeta</i> (butter) , <i>Piyusha</i>	Provide nutrient rich calories , calcium content , essential fatty acids and lipids

<i>Ikshu Varga</i>	Sugarcane products	<i>Ikshu</i> (sugarcane) , <i>Sharkara</i> (sugar) , <i>Madhu</i> (honey)	Act as glucose and calorie supplement
<i>Kritanna</i>	Processed food	<i>Peya</i> , <i>Vilepi</i> (rice gruels) , <i>Krishara</i> (porridge) , <i>Mansa Rasa</i> (meat soups) , <i>Paanaka</i> (fruit juice)	Provide overall nutrition especially during and after disease manifestation
<i>Aahara Yogi</i>	Additives and oils	<i>Tila Taila</i> (sesame oil) , <i>Sarshapa Taila</i> (Mustard oil), <i>Sarshapa</i> (mustard seeds) , <i>Jeeraka</i> (cumin seeds)etc.	Essential while preparation of food

Ayurveda also focuses on the role of water intake, beverages, post prandial drinks i.e. *Anupana* and condiments like *Lavana*, *Pippali*, *Kshara* in bestowing health. Post-prandial drinks give nourishment, pleasure, energy, sense of satisfaction, facilitate the assimilation and digestion of food, impart softness to food bolus, liquefy, digest and bring about quick diffusion in the body. These facilitate the entire process of digestion of food. (Cha.Su.27/325) The *Jalapana* (intake of drinking water) especially *Ushnodakapana* (consumption of warm water) has been given great importance even during the times of *Janapadodhwansa* as water is the elixir of life. It has qualities like *Vata-anulomana*, *Agneedeepana*, *Trishnaprashamana*, *Shleshmashoshana* all of which form an important part in digestion of food (Cha.Vi.3/40). In the *Vimanasthana* there is again mention of three dietary items namely *Lavana*, *Pippali* and *Kshara* (Cha.Vi.1/15) whose overconsumption should be avoided as they represent the salt, spicy and salts like bicarbonates which are added to a great extent in processed foods. These cause hypertension, water retention and cardio-vascular morbidity.¹¹ Hence it is necessary to take consideration what we eat, how we eat and when we eat in order to sustain a healthy life.

Conclusion-

It is evident that the diet remains the constant factor in affecting both health and disease condition. Ayurveda has given unprecedented importance of *Aahara* and its utility in maintenance and promotion of health. This review thus focuses on the different instances in the Ayurveda texts depicting the multidimensional utility and need of *Aahara* in supporting the function of body. The instances from contemporary research also underline the importance of nutritional support in form of diet in health preservation. Hence concluding we can state that-

अन्नाद्भवन्ति भूतानि | भगवद्गीता

REFERENCES-

¹Healthy diet [Internet]. [cited 2022 Mar 27]. Available from: <https://www.who.int/initiatives/behealthy/healthy-diet>

² Cena H, Calder PC. Defining a Healthy Diet: Evidence for The Role of Contemporary Dietary Patterns in Health and Disease. *Nutrients*. 2020;12(2):334. Published 2020 Jan 27. doi:10.3390/nu12020334

³ Rajak H. Importance of Food – Various Function of Food in Maintaining Good Health - hmhub [Internet]. 2019 [cited 2022 Mar 27]. Available from: <https://hmhub.in/importance-of-food-various-function-of-food-in-maintaining-good-health/>

⁴ Vani G, Prasad J. CONCEPT OF AGNI AND AHARA PAKA (METABOLIC TRANSFORMATION) IN AYURVEDA. *International Ayurvedic Medical Journal*. 2013 Aug 15;1:1–7.

⁵Poor Nutrition | CDC [Internet]. 2021 [cited 2022 Mar 27]. Available from: <https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/publications/factsheets/nutrition.htm>

⁶ Xu, H., Li, X., Adams, H., Kubena, K., & Guo, S. (2018). Etiology of Metabolic Syndrome and Dietary Intervention. *International journal of molecular sciences*, 20(1), 128. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijms20010128>

⁷ Koliaki, C., Spinos, T., Spinou, M., Brinia, M. E., Mitsopoulou, D., & Katsilambros, N. (2018). Defining the Optimal Dietary Approach for Safe, Effective and Sustainable Weight Loss in Overweight and Obese Adults. *Healthcare (Basel, Switzerland)*, 6(3), 73. <https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare6030073>

⁸ Sean T. Hammond, James H. Brown, Joseph R. Burger, Tatiana P. Flanagan, Trevor S. Fristoe, Norman Mercado-Silva, Jeffrey C. Nekola, Jordan G. Okie, Food Spoilage, Storage, and Transport: Implications for a Sustainable Future, *BioScience*, Volume 65, Issue 8, 01 August 2015, Pages 758–768, <https://doi.org/10.1093/biosci/biv081>

⁹ Buendía, J. R., Li, Y., Hu, F. B., Cabral, H. J., Bradlee, M. L., Quatromoni, P. A., Singer, M. R., Curhan, G. C., & Moore, L. L. (2018). Long-term yogurt consumption and risk of incident hypertension in adults. *Journal of hypertension*, 36(8), 1671–1679. <https://doi.org/10.1097/HJH.0000000000001737>

¹⁰ Reyes-Olavarría, D., Latorre-Román, P. Á., Guzmán-Guzmán, I. P., Jerez-Mayorga, D., Caamaño-Navarrete, F., & Delgado-Floody, P. (2020). Positive and Negative Changes in Food Habits, Physical Activity Patterns, and Weight Status during COVID-19 Confinement: Associated Factors in the Chilean Population. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 17(15), 5431. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17155431>

¹¹ Agócs, R., Sugár, D., & Szabó, A. J. (2020). Is too much salt harmful? Yes. *Pediatric nephrology (Berlin, Germany)*, 35(9), 1777–1785. [https://doi.org/10.1007/s00467-019-04387-](https://doi.org/10.1007/s00467-019-04387-4)